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Research on Promotion Paths of Primary Education Majors' Awareness of Stick Figure Application

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of the increasing visualisation of information dissemination, stick figures have become a commonly used teaching form in primary school classrooms due to their characteristics of strong generality and rapid expression. Since the 1980s, the skill of stick figure drawing has been an essential competency for normal university students majoring in primary education. However, in practical teaching, some of these students lack sufficient attention and have a weak awareness of application, which hinders the improvement of their stick figure drawing skills. To address this issue, starting with the cultivation of application awareness, this paper proposes three approaches: strengthening theoretical cognition, intensifying practical training, and integrating teaching scenarios with illustrations and texts. It is argued that enhancing application awareness is the key to promoting the improvement of stick figure drawing skills.

Keywords

Normal university students majoring in primary education; stick figure drawing; application awareness; skill improvement; teaching practice

1. Introduction

Stick Figures or Blackboard drawings are written in English as stick figures or Blackboard drawings. Stick figure drawing is a form of painting that uses concise and random lines to highly generalize complex shapes into basic forms such as squares, circles, and triangles, as well as combinations of these basic shapes, or to simplify them into corresponding geometric figures, in order to express the basic features of objects. The features are simplicity, speed and vividness. The drawing tools used for stick figures are very simple. You can draw on a blackboard with a piece of chalk and on any sheet of paper with a pencil or carbon pen. Therefore, in school curriculum teaching, simple sketches have become a form of painting with a

very high application rate.

2. Research Background and Problem Presentation

With the development of the new media environment, visual symbols have become an important way of information transmission. From WeChat emoticons, corporate logos, product illustrations to traffic rule signs, a large number of visual symbols are presented in the form of simple sketches. Simple sketches use points, lines and surfaces as the basic language, and through generalization, refinement and symbolization, they can convey clear information in a short time. This efficient expression method is highly consistent with the rapid information dissemination needs of contemporary society.

In the context of school education, simple sketches are also an important auxiliary tool for classroom teaching. Teachers draw on the blackboard while teaching, which not only enhances the visuality of the classroom but also helps students understand abstract concepts and increase their interest in learning. Especially in the primary school stage, students mainly rely on image thinking, and image expression is more in line with their cognitive characteristics. Therefore, simple sketches have become the most widely used form of painting in primary school classroom teaching.

Stick figure drawing has been one of the essential teaching skills for normal university students in China since the 1980s. In accordance with the requirements specified in the Standards for the Professional Teaching Competencies of Normal University Students Majoring in Primary Education (Trial), which was issued by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China on April 6, 2021, stick figure drawing was explicitly listed as a basic teaching skill that such students must master. However, practical teaching practice has revealed that some normal university students hold inadequate attention to stick figure drawing courses and show low learning initiative. Some students lack confidence due to their weak foundation in fine arts, while others consider stick figure drawing to have little relevance to their future teaching practice. Such cognitive biases directly affect their learning outcomes and the development of related skills.

To explore the underlying causes of these problems in depth, the author conducted a questionnaire survey among 102 students majoring in primary education. The survey results indicated that 93% of the respondents were unaware of the common applications of stick figure drawing in daily life and classroom teaching, which demonstrates a distinct lack of their awareness of application. Therefore, enhancing the awareness of application has become a key breakthrough to stimulate learning motivation and improve skill proficiency.

3. Theoretical Analysis: The Relationship Between Application Awareness and Skill Improvement

Learning motivation theory indicates that the degree to which an individual

recognizes the value of learning content directly affects their level of engagement. When students realize that a certain skill is closely related to their own development, they will generate a stronger learning motivation. Mastering the skill of simple drawing is not only a demonstration of drawing ability but also an important component of future classroom teaching expression skills.

Application awareness refers to an individual's recognition of the practical value of certain knowledge or skills in real-life situations and their tendency to actively apply them. For pre-service teachers majoring in primary education, only by recognizing the practical function of simple drawing in teaching can they shift from "passive learning" to "active mastery". Therefore, enhancing application awareness is a prerequisite for improving skills.

4. Practical Paths for Enhancing the Awareness of Applying Simple Sketches

4.1. Systematically explain the common knowledge of simple sketches to consolidate the cognitive foundation

First of all, students should be helped to correctly understand the concept and characteristics of simple sketches. Simple sketches are not complex artistic creations; instead, they use the most basic visual elements of points, lines, and surfaces as the main visual language, and are a painting form that summarizes the structural features of objects in the shortest time. The choice of tools is highly flexible, and carbon pens, chalks, markers, and pencils can all be used; the requirements for expression emphasize "capturing features", "emphasizing structure", and "seeking efficiency", rather than detailed realistic depictions or complex shapes.

In actual teaching, some teacher candidates develop a sense of difficulty due to the lack of systematic art training, believing that "drawing requires talent". Therefore, during the theoretical explanation stage, teachers should emphasize the core concepts of "simplification", "generalization" and "symbolization", helping students build the confidence that "everyone can learn and everyone can draw". For example, when explaining the principle of "generalization", complex objects can be decomposed into geometric shapes: an apple can be generalized as a circle, a house can be generalized as a rectangle plus triangles, and a person can be generalized as a combination of circles and lines. Through step-by-step demonstrations, students can intuitively understand that simple sketches are not complex artistic creations but rather a process of structural refinement.

In the demonstration teaching, the "explain while drawing" method can be adopted. For example, when explaining the concept of simple sketches, simple graphics of common enterprise logos can be drawn simultaneously, such as the curve combination of China Unicom's logo and the apple outline graphic of Apple Inc. This enables students to realize that a large number of visual symbols in life are

essentially applications of simple sketches. Another example is presenting the character illustrations in traffic signs and the graphic symbols of bathrooms, guiding students to analyze their line structures and design rules. Through these real-life cases, students can understand that simple sketches are not isolated classroom exercises but a common visual expression method in the real society.

In addition, an "image restoration" activity can be designed: The teacher presents a complex image, guiding students to summarize its main features with the fewest lines. Then, by comparing it with the original image, students can appreciate the significance of "subtraction thinking". Through the combination of theoretical explanations and case analyses, it helps students build a complete knowledge framework, laying a solid cognitive foundation for subsequent practice.

4.2. Strengthen practical training and enhance the application experience in creation

Practice is the core procedure for skill formation. Simply relying on theoretical explanations is insufficient to truly enhance one's ability; it is necessary to achieve proficiency and confidence through high-frequency and large-scale training. In the 32-hour course schedule， the practical content can be organized according to the three stages of "structural training - image generalization - teaching application".

In the first stage, the focus is on training the ability to combine points, lines and surfaces. For example, through methods such as "line control practice", "geometric shape combination" and "three-minute quick summary", students' mastery of basic modeling language is enhanced.

In the second stage, the training focuses on specific themes, including daily necessities (schoolbags, desks and chairs, clocks and watches), natural landscapes (trees, mountains, water), animals (puppies, birds, fish) and characters (students, teachers, farmers, etc.). Through specialized topic training, students gradually build a common teaching material library. During the practice process, each student accumulates approximately 500 works, and through repetitive practice, they form visual memory and modeling habits.

The third stage focuses on strengthening the application of teaching scenarios. For example, in the training of simple character sketches, guide students to observe the exaggerated facial features of WeChat emoticons, analyze the simplified line patterns, and then incorporate these elements into their own created characters. Another example is in the animal-themed exercises, where a "science class board illustration" can be designed, allowing students to depict the growth process of butterflies or the life cycle of frogs through simple sketches, enabling them to realize the close connection between simple sketches and subject teaching.

In addition, a "blackboard practical operation section" can be added. Have students stand on the podium and use chalk to conduct drawing training on the blackboard. Since there are differences in the feel, proportion control, and spatial layout

between blackboard writing and paper drawing, this practice can help students adapt to the real teaching environment in advance. For example, completing a complete blackboard composition within a limited time can train their spatial arrangement and time control abilities.

Through intense, diverse and context-based practical training, students not only enhance their skill proficiency, but also gradually develop an application-oriented thinking mode that "serves teaching".

4.3. Experience the teaching method with both pictures and text to enhance professional identity

Future teachers should possess the ability to combine language and images to present teaching content. However, in reality, many teachers rely on online pictures or ready-made lesson plans, neglecting the teaching value of on-site blackboard diagrams. Therefore, it is particularly important to cultivate the ability to present teaching content graphically and vividly during the teacher training stage.

In the classroom simulation teaching, primary school Chinese texts such as "The Crow Drinking Water" and "The Little Frog Looking for Its Mother" can be selected as examples. While explaining the story plot, students gradually draw comic strips on the blackboard: the crow - the bottle - the pebbles - the water level rises; the little frog - growing hind legs - growing front legs - turning into a frog. Through the method of "telling while drawing", the development process of the story becomes concrete and dynamic.

For instance, in the simulation of mathematics classes, simple sketches can be used to assist in explaining the "meaning of fractions", by drawing divided circles or rectangles. In science classes, simple sketches can be employed to demonstrate the structure of plant growth or the process of weather changes. Through the design of interdisciplinary scenarios, students will realize that simple sketches not only belong to the art curriculum but are also important tools for teaching in various subjects.

During the experience, students often find that when they can clearly convey the teaching content through a few lines, they will gain a significant sense of professional achievement. This experience enhances their sense of professional identity, enabling them to recognize the close connection between the skill of simple sketches and their future role as teachers.

5. Implementation Effects and Teaching Implications

Through a comprehensive strategy combining cognitive guidance, practice reinforcement, and experience in teaching scenarios, students' attitudes towards simple sketches have significantly changed. Initially, they were "unconcerned" and "unconfident", but gradually they became proactive in practicing and accumulating materials, and even spontaneously used simple sketches for classroom

presentations in other courses.

Some students reported during their education internships that when using simple sketches to assist in explanations in actual classrooms, students' attention was more focused, classroom interactions were more lively, and the blackboard writing was more attractive. This indicates that the enhancement of application awareness not only promotes skill formation but also improves teaching effectiveness.

Teaching practice has taught us that the simple drawing course should shift from a purely technical training approach to a "teaching application-oriented" model. The course design should closely align with future teaching scenarios, integrating skill training with vocational ability development, and forming a systematic training system.

6. Conclusion

During the implementation of the simple drawing course in the primary education major, the lack of application awareness is an important factor affecting the improvement of teachers' skills. By systematically explaining the basic knowledge of simple drawing, strengthening a large amount of practical training, adding blackboard operation sections, and designing interdisciplinary teaching scenario experiences, the application awareness of simple drawing for teachers can be effectively enhanced, thereby promoting the overall improvement of their skills.

Simple sketches are not only a basic painting skill, but also an important tool for primary school teachers to express and communicate in the classroom. In the future curriculum reform, there should be a further emphasis on application-oriented approaches, and a "awareness - interest - ability" progressive training model should be established. This will enable teacher candidates to develop stable teaching application abilities while mastering the skills, laying a solid foundation for enhancing their comprehensive teaching quality.

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